

STATE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND:

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 allowed the state education agencies and their partners to submit a competitive grant proposal to expand and broaden the "comprehensive system of personnel development" which has been a requirement of the law since 1975. The California Department of Education seized the unique opportunity to forge new broad-scale, collaborative partnerships. The Partnership Committee on Special Education (PCSE), in compliance with IDEA §1452(b), consisting of over eighty entities developed the work plan for the grant with input from parents, educators, and interested community members from around the state. That plan focused on the ten "required elements of an effective educational system" that are outlined in federal law (IDEA §1451[a][6]): high academic standards, education reform coordination, results, service integration/coordination, transition standards, comprehensive system of personnel development, research-based strategies, disciplinary strategies, funding, and consumer/parent involvement. The goals, objectives and activities of the plan incorporate each of these ten elements. The activities are outlined to the three audiences of the grant: student, teacher/potential teacher and systems (See the Abstract, pp. 3-6).

PURPOSE & INTENT:

The purpose of the State Improvement Grant, \$1,840,000 each year for five years (CFDA 84.323A), is "to assist state education agency and their partners in reforming and improving their systems for providing educational, early intervention, and transitional services, including their systems for professional development, technical assistance, and dissemination of knowledge about best practices, to improve results for children with disabilities." The initial grant award period is from February 1, 1999 to January 31, 2000 for \$1,840,000.

WHOM THE GRANT ACTIVITIES ARE DIRECTLY SERVING:

The following are direct recipients of grant activities over the five years of the project: general education and special education teachers/administrators, service providers, early intervention service providers, consumers/families, related agency personnel and service providers, university/college professors, and university students currently enrolled in teaching preparation programs.

GRANT FUNDS DISTRIBUTION:

The administration of the State Improvement Grant is a contractual relationship with Sonoma State University, a pre-service partner. Funds under the grant will be contracted to Parent Training and Information Centers, Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs), local education agencies, and universities to provide specific technical assistance, training, family/consumer outreach and participation, teacher recruitment and retention components defined in the activities of the grant.

Fund distribution for a specific activity of the Grant will be based on the amount allocated in the grant and the special education pupil count for that regional/district or service area.

Some of the SIG related activities are:

- The Leadership Institute (January - June 2002)
- Technical Assistance
- Regionally Coordinated Training Programs (Supporting the Core Message areas):
 - California Reading Initiative and Special Education
 - Positive Behavior Supports for Safe and Healthy Schools
 - Collaboration in Education
 - Transition: School to Adult Life
 - Least Restrictive Environment
 - Family Partnerships
 - IDEA '97
- Awards to Promote Excellence in Education - "Collaborative Challenge"
- Information Dissemination (i.e. Resources in Special Education - RiSE library, "The Special EDge" newsletter, and more)
- Family Partnership Project

A robust SIG web site is maintained at www.calstat.org with links to significant compliance documents on the Division's web site. This method of communication to the PCSE and others is proving to be a rewarding venture. CalSTAT is a special training and technical assistance contract of the Division's that assists the Division in the administration of the SIG.

- SIG Performance Reports with data displays can be found at:
<http://www.calstat.org/pcsesig.html#SIG>